



Rural Matters

The Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs

Summer 2007

Our Strategic Plan

“OCRA continues to break boundaries, as we expand the value-added services we provide to rural Indiana. ‘Breaking the Boundaries,’ our strategic plan, is allowing us to restructure Indiana Main Street, align the Community Development Block Grant program, create the Rural Capacity Grants, encourage philanthropic match in our grant programs, and participate in various rural partnerships. We are excited about the new programs and incentives that ‘Breaking the Boundaries’ has produced and the opportunities it will bring in the future.”

David Terrell
Executive Director

Lt. Governor Skillman Awards Over \$12 Million in Community Focus Funds

The Community Development Block Grant awards ceremony for the first round of funding in 2007 was held on May 31. Lt. Governor Becky Skillman awarded 26 Hoosier communities with Community Focus Funds totaling \$12,468,474.

This was the first round of funding in which extra points were given to communities that provided philanthropic matches in their applications. Thirty-four percent of successfully funded projects had a match.

Included is a list of the awardees, types of projects and grant amounts, including MBE Incentive. See page 3.



Lt. Governor Skillman awards the Town of Up-land a Community Focus Fund.

Micro-Enterprise Technical Assistance

Small businesses are the engine of Indiana’s economy; they provide important services, a livelihood for entrepreneurs, and jobs for Hoosiers. However, starting or expanding a small business is not easy. In rural Indiana, there are limited financing options for small businesses. Micro-loan fund programs can create jobs by providing small loans to businesses that cannot obtain a loan from a bank or another source.

Through funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Seedco, and the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs, these agencies administered training on how small businesses can grow in rural communities. The training showed how the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and other funding sources are available to help start a micro-loan program for small busi-

nesses in Indiana communities.



Inside this issue:

Rural Capacity Grant	2
Advancing Women In Business	2
Community Focus Funds	3
Rural Opportunities	4
Grant Administrator Training	5
Broadband Conference	5
Indiana Main Street	6

OCRA Offers Funding Opportunity for Rural Economic Development Projects

The Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA) ended its second round of Rural Capacity Grant (RCG) applications on Friday, June 29, 2007. In December of 2006, OCRA awarded almost \$3 million in funding to support workforce development and rural entrepreneurship. OCRA created the RCGs to fulfill the priorities set forth in its strategic plan, "Breaking the Boundaries." This competitive grant process challenged communities to develop creative ways to build capacity in their communities.

Examples of projects funded during the first round of RCG awards include, but were not limited to:

- Support and training for rural entrepreneurs;
- Provision of resources to promote the success of a business;
- Initiatives designed to foster an entrepreneurial culture;
- Training opportunities intended to meet the job market of the area;
- Education for rural Hoosiers to aid in building job skills; and
- Programs focusing on increasing basic skills such as literacy and math.

The second round of RCG award winners will be announced in September and an awards ceremony will be held prior to the end of the year.



Lt. Governor Skillman awards the Grant County Economic Growth Council a Rural Capacity Grant in 2006.

Advancing Women in Business

OCRA and the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) partnered together to host "Advancing Women in Business" seminars in June. The one day seminars were geared toward informing and advancing women entrepreneurs throughout the state of Indiana. Lt. Governor Skillman spoke at these events along with distinguished rural women entrepreneurs. The speakers provided inspirational stories and guidance based on their experiences of starting their own businesses.

Lt. Governor Skillman Awards Over \$12 Million in Community Focus Funds cont...

The Community Development Block Grant award recipients are:

<u>Awardees</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Project</u>	<u>Grant Amount</u>
Ashley, Town of	DeKalb/Steuben	Water Project	\$525,000
Carthage, Town of	Rush	Water Project	\$525,000
Charlestown, City of	Clark	Water Treatment	\$525,000
Daviess County	Daviess	Senior Center	\$505,050
Dublin, Town of	Wayne	Water Project	\$463,733
Edwardsport, Town of	Knox	Fire Station	\$367,500
Fort Branch, Town of	Gibson	Waste Water Improvements	\$500,000
Fountain City, Town of	Wayne	Waste Water Improvements	\$500,000
Fulton County	Fulton	Waste Water Improvements	\$525,000
Greene County	Greene	Water Project	\$461,202
Huntington County	Huntington	Waste Water Improvements	\$525,000
Knox County	Knox	Transportation Facility	\$278,618
Loogootee, City of	Martin	Storm Drainage Project	\$514,500
Lynnville, Town	Warrick	Sewer Project	\$500,000
Montgomery, Town of	Daviess	Waste Water Improvements	\$525,000
Morgan County	Morgan	Water Project	\$500,000
New Point, Town of	Decatur	Fire Station	\$367,500
Princeton, City of	Gibson	Special Needs Facility	\$248,972
Rensselaer, City of	Jasper	Water Project	\$517,650
Ridgeville, Town of	Randolph	Waste Water Improvements	\$525,000
Rosedale, Town of	Parke	Water Project	\$525,000
Sunman, Town of	Ripley	Community Building	\$498,750
Upland, Town of	Grant	Waste Water Improvements	\$470,000
Wayne County	Wayne	Waste Water Improvements	\$525,000
Waynetown, Town of	Montgomery	Water Utility Project	\$525,000
Whitley County	Whitley County	Senior Center	\$525,000

Heads Up about CDBG Funds

A policy clarification was sent out via mass email on March 22, 2007 stating that NO costs to be paid from CDBG funds may be incurred prior to release of funds without written approval from OCRA! However, that communication also stated that “costs incurred (from local funds) for preliminary engineering and/or preliminary acquisition (not actual acquisition) paid up to **18 months** prior to grant award may be used toward local match.” That period of time had previously been 12 months prior to grant award.

Please Note

As a reminder to all, semi-annual reports are due until a project is placed in Step 2. After Step 2, if the project has a subrecipient, the subrecipient semi-annual reports begin and continue until 5 years after the date the Certificate of Completion (COC) is issued.

It is of utmost importance that grantees are reminded to submit their A-133 State Board of Accounts audit reports to OCRA to prompt the COC issuance. OCRA *does not* automatically receive a copy of those reports.

The 2007 HUD income limits, effective March 20, 2007, were sent out via mass email. Please note that the “low-income” levels used for the CDBG program have not changed since 2006. For those who did not receive a copy, please let [Cris Dorman](#) know.

Please provide any additions, deletions, or changes of email addresses to [Cris Dorman](#) in the Communications Division of OCRA. Most future correspondence will be sent from this division via email. Cris Dorman can also be reached by phone at 317.232.0162.

Rural Opportunities

The Indiana Humanities Council is hosting Regional Forums throughout the state. Please check the OCRA Web site for Regional Forum information. The site will be updated as the information becomes available.

[SHARE Network Indiana](#)



[SHARE Network Indiana](#) is a free, online, statewide resource directory created to help Hoosiers find, keep, or obtain better jobs. SHARE is an acronym for Showing How Awareness of Resources Empowers and is sponsored by the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, the Department of Workforce Development (DWD), and the Department of Correction (DOC) in collaboration with the United States Department of Labor. SHARE Network of Indiana’s vision is that organizations across the state will register for the resource directory and take advantage of this opportunity to more easily connect with the Hoosiers they serve.

SHARE Network Indiana offers a vast array of resources including food banks, clothing banks, child care, substance abuse rehabilitation, health services, and many more. The SHARE Network Resource Directory is available to all Hoosiers with Internet access. SHARE Network Access Points (SNAPs) offer trained volunteers to assist the public in using the directory. SNAPs are faith-based and community organizations where eager job seekers can go locally to look for jobs via computers and receive direct referrals for employment services.

Effective
July 1

OCRA will be
offering a
Micro-
enterprise
Fund.
More infor-
mation com-
ing soon!

Grant Administrator Training

Rural communities depend on Grant Administrators to facilitate interaction with state government. The Grant Administrator becomes the driving force behind change in these communities and will see the long-term benefits of their services through recognition and project success. Because of the high-impact role the Grant Administrator plays, this training and certification course is offered to equip Grant Administrators to effectively carry out their duties.

TEST-OUT

FEE: \$25.00

Wednesday, August 29, 2007

12:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Registration deadline:

August 24, 2007

(The Test-out is for those who have previously been certified and would like to renew their certification.

Re-certification is required every 2 years.)

TRAINING

FEE: \$100.00

Wednesday, October 10, 2007

Wednesday, October 17, 2007

Wednesday, October 24, 2007

9:00 am – 4:00 pm each day

Wednesday, October 31, 2007

9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Registration deadline:

October 3, 2007

Registration forms can be found on our Web site at www.IN.gov/ocra. Click on the “Grant Writers” section and follow the “Training Workshops” link to the registration form. Register soon! Classes are nearly full!

Connecting Rural Indiana 2007: A Conversation about Broadband

The Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs recently hosted a statewide broadband conference, *Connecting Rural Indiana 2007: A Conversation about Broadband* in downtown Indianapolis. Community leaders, economic developers, interested citizens and experts in high-speed communication came together to discuss broadband deployment in Indiana. Lt. Governor Becky Skillman was on-hand to deliver a keynote address highlighting the importance of broadband and other technologies to rural economic development. Other presentations addressed the methods of broadband deployment available to Indiana communities, distance education, and telemedicine.

The Daniels-Skillman Administration and the Office of Community and Rural Affairs understand the significant role that technology plays in the vitality and sustainability of rural economies. This conference marked a critical step in creating a dialogue between parties that have a significant interest in the deployment of broadband throughout Indiana. Lt. Governor Skillman and the Office of Community and Rural Affairs were pleased by the overwhelming positive response that *Connecting Rural Indiana 2007* generated and look forward to continuing the conversation about broadband with Hoosiers throughout the state.

INDIANA MAIN STREET

Downtown Enhancement Grant

Lt. Governor Skillman, OCRA, and Indiana Main Street (IMS) recently announced that \$200,000 is available for downtown enhancement projects. The Downtown Enhancement Grant is available to participating Indiana Main Street Communities for projects that promote economic development and improve the quality of life of residents in the community.

Applications are due August 21. Projects that may qualify for funding include but are not limited to: promotional campaigns; program branding; façade renovation or rehabilitations; or the establishment of revolving loan programs specific to Main Street activities.

For more information on the Downtown Enhancement Grant contact Jo Grandel at 317-232-8910 or jgrandel@ocra.in.gov.

2007 Cornelius O'Brien Historic Preservation and Indiana Main Street Conference

The 2007 Cornelius O'Brien Historic Preservation and Indiana Main Street Conference will be held on October 18-20, 2007 in Richmond, Indiana. The theme for the conference is "Downtown, Preservation, and All That Jazz." This year's conference promises to bring exciting plenary speakers and informative sessions that will aid historians, preservationists, and Main Street participants in their revitalization and restoration efforts. The conference format has experienced a "revitalization" as well – be sure to check out the conference Web site for full agenda details at www.in.gov/dnr/historic/obrien.html.

Indiana Main Street Criteria

Communities participating in the Indiana Main Street (IMS) program receive one of three designations. Below is a brief overview of the levels of participation.

Nationally Accredited Community

This type of community

holds the highest designation from both the state and national organizations.

State Designated Community

This designation is given to communities that are doing all the activities needed to bring successful programs and projects to their downtown districts.

Active Community

This type of community has a broader definition

than the other two. Active Communities are newly interested in the Main Street concept and are in the beginning stages of forming their organizations. This designation also applies to communities that are actively participating in the IMS program. Active Communities are on the verge of meeting the criteria for State Designation status.

The criteria for all three categories can be found on the OCRA Web site.

Nationally Accredited Communities for 2007:

- Aurora;
- Bloomington;
- Crawfordsville;
- Elkhart;
- Farmland;
- Frankfort;
- Jeffersonville;
- Kokomo;
- Lafayette-West Lafayette;
- Lawrenceburg;
- Logansport;
- Marion;
- Richmond;
- Rising Sun;
- Shelbyville; and
- Wabash.

State Designated Communities for 2007:

- Bedford;
- Bremen;
- Delphi;
- Greensburg;
- Greentown;
- Indianapolis Downtown Inc.;
- Jasper;
- Madison;
- Nappanee;
- Newburgh;
- Rensselaer;
- Seymour;
- Valparaiso;
- Vevay;
- Warsaw; and
- Winchester.

